2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5
Nepal AK1

used in its construction. The Mandal goes first to the western pillar; then to the north, east, and south, and finishes up with the centre. As he does this a Lama takes a small *torma* from the altar and presses it against each of the pillars in turn. Following this, rice and flowers are thrown at each pillar, at the same time all present shouting: "*Tashi Shu.*" Later on, the carpenters are given the head and two limbs of the ox: this is their payment.

Strictly speaking, no one should sleep in a new house until after the *Li Tashi* has been carried out; but most people do not bother to observe this rule. Although it has nothing to do with the building of houses, it is of interest to note, in passing, that a man should never sleep directly beneath either of the two main cross-beams; this does not, however, apply to women.

When a building has been completed it is usual for the owner to give a feast to all the workers. On this occasion the kitchen fire will be lighted for the first time, and some old man, not necessarily the owner of the house, unless he is considered sufficiently aged, will climb up into the roof with a little fire and a pot of water and throw them out through the gable: this is to ensure that in future the smoke will go out of the house and not hang about inside. It may here be noted that all Lepcha houses are constructed with what is technically known as a saddle roof; that is, one having two gable ends, and in which the ridge is shorter than the distance between the ridge and the eaves. The eaves run round all four sides of the house, the thatch at the two ends being carried some distance inside the gables, which are otherwise left open for ventilation. The function of these open gables is not to keep the air inside the house fresh but to carry the smoke from the kitchen away. At night, however, when the fire has died down, they permit fresh air to enter the house; and it may well be that to this is partly due the Lepcha's apparent freedom from tuberculosis, to which most other Himalayan tribes are particularly susceptible. The Nepalis, for instance, are very prone to contract this disease,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

it is usual to call in some experienced old man to fasten such things up. None of the things had been removed from the house while the roof was being repaired. It is said that a new roof lasts for about seven years, after which it must be completely renewed. No nails are used in the construction of houses, all woodwork being mortised and tied where necessary with canes. Even large buildings like the monastery are constructed entirely without nails.

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There is no furniture in Lepcha houses; beds, tables (except the low Tibetan variety), and chairs being unknown. The kitchen stove is merely a platform of earth, on which some half-dozen large stones are placed as supports for the cooking pots. These are generally of copper or brass, and I never once saw any kind of earthenware vessel and was told they were never used. Stores of maize and millet hang from the rafters, and other grains are kept in baskets stacked against the walls. The family bedding may generally be seen draped across these baskets during the day-time; and unwanted clothing is suspended from bamboo slivers inserted in cracks in the walls. I occasionally noticed that the walls had been papered with old newspapers. One such was plastered with years-old copies of the *Evening News*, one of which advertised the film of "Bengal Lancer"; but how these ever reached Lingtem is beyond my comprehension. Our own cast-off papers were always in much demand, one man in particular asking constantly for pictures of wars. He seemed to think that war was a fine experience, and talked of little else, although of course he had never seen one. Anyhow, the walls of his cottage are no longer bare: and for the rest of his life he can sit in peace while gazing at pictures of Franco's atrocities. I hope sincerely that this is the nearest to war he will get.

Water is brought in long hollow bamboos and stored in copper pots, of the type that form part of the marriage gifts. These do not hold more than a couple of gallons, and are

291
142

Town-bred. A Gangtok Lepcha boy. Judging from his headgear I surmise that some relative is a servant at the British Residency.

[301
177]

[335
301]

Country-bred. Note the necklace of snail shells.

[facing p. 211]